

NIHILISM U.S.A. – McANARCHY IN THE PLAYPEN

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As of yet, the often dizzying banquet of liberatory thought known as anarchism has failed to make itself heard in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Worker's Paradise, its most ruthless muzzler throughout a tumultuous history. This comes as little surprise considering the last great anarchist movement, "the most advanced model of proletarian power ever realized,"[1] was destroyed in Spain over sixty years ago; crushed between, on one side, a dress rehearsal for the Blitzkrieg and, on the other, communists already well-rehearsed in the brutality of Stalin's ongoing purges and merely flaunting their expertise in such matters. Though a dedicated handful of writers, and an even smaller handful of activists, have maintained something of a coherent, though highly exclusive, tradition through years of obscurity, anarchism has, as if squirming through one of the space/time worm-holes creating so much delight among the Art Bell conspiratorial faithful, emerged in some unusual places. The anarcho-capitalist is one such contemporary manifestation which, thankfully, appears to be readily identifiable to all as an abomination warranting little beyond repeated ridicule.

Sadly, another such modern version of the Idea - particularly attractive to young minds already severely pummelled by years of prolonged exposure to Disney and its Alternative Inc. variants, not to mention what is officially referred to as public education - threatens to so thoroughly undermine and neuter anarchism's traditional strengths as to render it an irrelevant joke. Whereas the traditional anarchist project has been to build truly democratic communities void of coercive and exploitive social relationships and committed to nurturing their members so they may fully realize their potentialities as

individuals, this new and improved McAnarchy Lite would have everyone an eternal feral child clutching, if not a stuffed Disney character, certainly a stuffed Tristan Tsara. Despite the deluge of monikers coined to describe all of the colourful factions sharing in this bold attempt to trivialize traditional anarchism - ranging from anti-civilizationists to extropians to immediatists to neo-primitivists (all the products of a tiny collection of people hiding behind a swarm of pseudonyms) - the fuss over labels merely obscures a verbose, if not particularly intellectually fruitful, replay of many standing arguments between the social or 'collectivist' anarchist and what is usually referred to as the individualist anarchist and has, historically, found most of its adherents in John Wayne's America. And with the exponential deepening of mass alienation in a culture where the smoke from John Wayne's celluloid six-guns, brought up to date with Schwarzenegger's vidiot death-rays, becomes ever thicker, it should be little surprise young gullibles shorn of meaningful social commitment would leap at a body of thought encouraging them to do what they've always done in this age of crisis - cuddle and cling to their own trembling egos for comfort.

Guy Debord may have been correct in his estimation that, "the claims of anarchism in its individualist variants are laughable"[2]; but he was probably mistaken to have referred to most of these laughable claims, which all find their distant roots in Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, as anything anarchist in the first place. "The only way The Unique One [Stirner's term for the unfettered egoist he championed as the pinnacle of absolute personal freedom] can be arrayed in the categories of anarchism," writes R.W.K. Paterson, "is by distorting these categories to accommodate him or - and this is the method normally chosen - by mutilating Stirner's ideas beyond recognition"[3]. Paterson's comprehension of anarchist theory may have been somewhat cursory; but in contradistinction to the assorted individualist Olympians of today, he has written the only thorough study of Stirner's thought on the novel basis of Stirner's own words: "The Unique

One is the rebel without a cause, who, like God, is exclusively his own cause and who can therefore exclaim, as against anarchism as against all other forms of commitment, 'Nothing is more important to me than myself!'"[4] The supreme irony of this persistent identity crisis where Stirner is confused with the anarchists is that despite the quickness with which Stirner's young individualist contemporaries point out evidence of Marxist contaminants in the works of their opponents, Stirner's identification with anarchism begins with Marx and Engels, specifically their slanderous assaults on Bakunin. Hoping to grossly amplify their dubious charges that Bakunanism was "by class nature a petty bourgeois socio-political trend," Marx and Engels cited Stirner as "the prophet of contemporary anarchism," and then they alleged, "Bakunin blended [Stirner] with Proudhon and labeled the blend 'anarchism'." [5] The reader is invited to peruse Marx's pitiless dismissal of 'Saint Max' in *The German Ideology* to understand the full extent of the slight being levelled against Bakunin (who in all probability would have applauded the bulk of Marx's attack on Stirner since his true intellectual inspirations were, in fact, *Marx* and Proudhon).

Neo-Stirnerites, egoists, autonomists, primitivists, neo-situationists, chaos-fortified alternative Sufists - if not anarchists, who is the cast of characters behind this swamp of polysyllabic appellations? 'Petty bourgeois' is not such a bad place to start. Close examination of this McAnarchism in any of its forms reveals a collage of mirrors unwittingly, and with surprisingly little distortion, reflecting back and reaffirming a host of values that define the wider corporatist/consumer culture (and a predilection for pretentious, self-aggrandizing labels in high in-group jargonese is among the lesser mainstream replications to appear among these self-professed harbingers of a new improved radicalism). None of this should come as a surprise given that the McAnarchists are, generally, members of that mournful generation who, by a louse-nibbled whisker, missed

the euphoric excesses of the sixties (as well as, to be fair, the moments of true social activism; and in this the McAnarchist should feel little envy because many a hippy, too stoned or pinned to the shag rug by the weight of a free love experiment, missed most of their opportunities to march on the Man). Conditioned to pine for these days, so mythologized by the mass image machinery the revolutionary boomers have since gone on to profitably create, the McAnarchists have, like most everyone else, embraced basic hedonism as a supreme value, though, and to their credit, they do shun it in its most crassly commodified expressions.

Lest the reader, or any eaves-dropping McAnarchists, suspect they are beginning to detect a pungent whiff of something puritanical or a sweaty ode to the work ethic seeping into the present discussion, it should be stressed that anarchism, *real* anarchism, with its creative approaches to education, and numerous links to and praise for artists, ranging from Man Ray to Eugene O'Neill, has been anything but an austere utopian vision. Of all the major mass social movements that have risen up to challenge modern history's agents of oppression, only among the anarchists can be found statements such as the following by Herbert Read:

It was play rather than work which enabled man to evolve his higher faculties - everything we mean by the word 'culture'. . . Play is freedom, is disinterestedness, and it is only by virtue of disinterested free activity that man has created his cultural values. Perhaps it is this theory of all work and no play that has made the Marxist such a very dull boy.[6]

But McAnarchism represents an equally ridiculous all play and no work polar opposite to the Marxist's regimented severity; and, moreover, McAnarchism is also an unconscious

regurgitation of one of the high ideals ubiquitously embedded in mass media commercial messaging: personal success is measured by the amount of commercially approved play the adult consumer, merely a big kid with a wallet, is able to procure for she and her family. Though the unavoidable bleak reality behind the billboard illusion is that those who still have jobs are working more hours than ever to purchase their Sega game systems and package trips to Disney World, appeals to play are as mainstream as a Prozac prescription. Politics is now play, mere competitive stand-up comedy or a chance to enjoy the spectacle of an elected representative to toss a first pitch. Public education is infotainment - learning should be fun (as well as interactive!) or, the more typical case, where even *Oprah* is too cerebral, not at all.

Being at the forefront of contemporary radicalism, McAnarchism boasts of seeing through the more obvious trappings of the marketplace and champions sources of pure play characterized by daring, more becoming self-styled insurrectionists. Thus writing an article on Decadence has now become a revolutionary act. So too has perusing pornography as well as being able to recount "The Ten Rules of Anal Sex." [7] (Note the same naughty anti-political correctness which is now a prerequisite for quality late night talk show comedy is also a prerequisite for good radicalism.) Open discussion of, not to mention direct indulgence in, sexuality might have held some revolutionary weight when Emma Goldman squared off against the Victorian mind, or when Alex Comfort wrote in the pre-*Boogie Nights* 1940's his initial works arguing that sexual freedom was crucial to any meaningful anarchist society; but in the wake of the upheavals in morality accompanying the sixties, the moment has most definitely past, and should have been evidenced to all by the present mass public weariness over repeated news coverage of Bill Clinton turning the White House, that gleaming beacon in the night for revolutionaries the world over, into a seething spume of presidential semen.

Still, sex remains the one authentic, and fervidly urgent, experience available to the child of the cable-fed cloisters of the middle-classes. (Drugs, too, in a paradoxical better living through chemistry way; and, despite Timothy Leary's remains having been incinerated in deep space, paeans to the glory of a good high retain their appeal among mall-bred hemp-clad revolutionaries.) Only a domineering eunuch of Jesse Helms' stature could possibly be in the mind to belittle the sexual experience; although it has quite lucidly been argued that belittling is precisely what is accomplished by most pornographic depictions - it's highly unlikely a post-revolution, enlightened society would still produce those web-sites currently receiving the bulk of Internet traffic and promote themselves with banner ads such as "See Asian teens tortured and fucked to death". But equally, only Caligula, having forced a few races to do his chores for him, was able to devote the whole of his existence to the pursuit of the perfect orgasm. At a point in history where corporate Caligulas have never before had such sweeping powers to enslave so many people and condemn their lives to such absolute misery, a rompish evening of anal sex, as delicious as that may be, seems a rather impotent response to the problem of 40,000 people, mostly children, dying each day as a direct result of hunger and poverty, which is the sort of issue that has traditionally occupied the thoughts and efforts of self-proclaimed revolutionaries

Caligula is not such a bad symbolic figurehead for the rather aristocratic tradition of sexuality the McAnarchists have inherited. Consumption of pornography has already become a new fad behind Suburbia's closed blinds; and, more importantly, most popular pornography usually involves luxurious backdrops, *Playboy's* models sprawling across the hoods of Jaguars or the canopied bed of a five star hotel in Monaco being the most obvious example of forcibly equating sexual imagery with affluence. Similarly, in an effort to distinguish *their* momentous sexual exploits from those of the little people (who have always enjoyed ample sexual activity, despite the best efforts of the priests and

missionaries, simply because it's the one thing poor people everywhere have always been able to afford, at least until the baby appears), the Decadents - apologists for the essence of their bourgeois worlds, their so-called rebelliousness merely being a critique of some of the staid hoops they were expected to jump through before they could reap the many rewards owing to them for having the good sense to be born into the right families - began a culture of self-aggrandizing mystification of sexuality which is still being nurtured by their contemporary middle-class chroniclers who, fashionably and profitably, churn out titillating dissertations on de Sade and the like. With little reflection, and certainly none of the poetic genius of a Rimbaud, McAnarchists like Maria Mitchell merely continue this tradition of rich-kid mystification when she declares a book like *Talk Dirty to Me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex* is "liberating".[8] (In a similar fashion, and with startling blindness toward the rivers of alcohol that have drowned, and continue to drown, the lives of working people, nobody has been able to fully appreciate a good drunk, or other consciousness obliterating state, like the little rebel who's wandered from the suburbs and who's presently pondering his next letter to the McAnarchist bible *Anarchy* (sic) *A Journal of Desire Armed*.)

Leading McAnarchist John Zerzan, with uncharacteristic perception, once stated, "to assert that we can be whole/enlightened/healed within the present madness amounts to endorsing the madness."[9] Zerzan was referring to the plethora of New Age cults presently in vogue to elevate the haggard consciences of his Woodstock elders (and there is a McAnarchist New Agism, on grotesque display in Jay Kinney's repulsive *Gnosis*); yet McAnarchism's only practical advice on the topic of actively confronting "the present madness" is to escape from it into a world of pure hedonism which inevitably can only mean, as the sixties scenesters so dramatically demonstrated, an attempt at wholeness by a lucky few (or in the case of pornography and anal sex, doing the same thing every young

bank manager and Barnes & Nobles clerk in the Western world is doing but being among the shrewd few who've *declared* they've done something radical).[10] Take Alt. New Ager Hakim Bey, McAnarchism's most vivid mirror image of Disney's America. In *Temporary Autonomous Zone*, a masturbatory collection of chaotic ramblings, *proudly* chaotic, he presents his supreme gift to radicalism; a gift that one quickly learns is the same gift every transnational gives its employees whenever Easter weekend comes up which is simply some time away from work (heck, most companies give two fifteen minute paid TAZ's and a lunch hour TAZ each and every day). Thus, unconscious TAZ's abound everywhere. The movie *Animal House* "is a kind of temporary revolution," writes a local unwitting prophet of the TAZ and propagator of all the inanities of the brave new field of Cultural Studies, "Our hierarchies are overturned." [11] Given this affinity pop culture and its financial backers on Wall Street share with today's radicals, not to mention their own formidable radical past filled with equally innocuous hallucinogenic Happenings, it's highly unlikely Corporate America shudders whenever Bey's followers fire up the hookah for another seditious TAZ. "Those who have cultivated the pleasure of play cannot be expected to give it up simply to make a political point," writes Bey; and though practically any historical revolutionary picked at random would vehemently object, hardcore contemporary rebels like the aging yuppies purchasing their 'ethical' mutual funds or conspicuously consuming 'green' products (and even non-rebels wandering the malls or at home watching *Baywatch*) could not concur more.[12] Bey should test his brand of Party Politics with the workers in the sweatshops of Nicaragua recently discovered making jeans for Wal-Mart. In the one half-hour break they have in the course of their fourteen hour shifts they could hold one of his highly recommended Immediatist Potlatches; and though their gifts to each other will probably be quite humble on their fifteen cents an hour wage, perhaps little more than sharing in a case of tuberculosis, they're bosses should, in no time,

at least according to the projections made at the *TAZ* laboratory between experiments in perfecting the optimum hashish strain, be stampeding back to the safety of their Manhattan offices.

Needless to say, Bey only propagates his liberatory views among the least constrained and most affluent inhabitants of the earth, Northern bohemians who believe that having to suffer the indignity of listening to the admittedly wretched "We Are The World" is a far more serious issue than being a victim of the famine to which the god-awful song/subliminal Pepsi ad attempted some sort of address; Northern mall-spawned rebels who live off of the abundant alley scraps of a lucrative system of neo-colonialism, the wealth of which is, by essence, contingent upon the existence of the Nicaraguan sweatshop and the emaciated Ethiopian corpse. Every young rebel busking on the street corners of the northern hemisphere is collecting his spare change from passing Exxon Human Resources Directors and Wal-Mart managers. A similar gaping blind spot proved to be the Achilles heel of the proto-McAnarchist (but far, *far* more insightful) Situationists who, "mistakenly took a temporary economic boom in post-war France for a permanent trend in capitalist societies," writes Peter Marshall. "Their belief in economic abundance," which was to provide the material basis for a culture devoted to satiating every desire, "now seems wildly optimistic. . . . In many parts of the globe, especially in the southern hemisphere, so-called 'natural alienation', let alone social alienation, has yet to be overcome." [13] And, moreover, the temporary economic booms of the north have always been highly dependent on the successful cultivation of "so-called natural alienation" in the south (or war). Calls to "live without dead time" seem extraordinarily callous when most of the earth's population are forcibly not permitted to live without hunger pangs or dead children.

Neil Postman wrote, "Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business. . . ."[14] And so too have our radicals, one might add. Bey is the most obvious culprit in his fawning efforts to appeal to today's jaded post-modern Alternative Inc. youngsters. His most serious statements are laughable pastiches of the once famous cryptic LSD-inspired Cut-Up tomes which amused the last generation in the sixties, at least until it was time for everyone to finish their business degrees. In fact, Bey manages to so out-psychedelicize most sixties scribes with his wild incoherent neo-Dada, he's able to make Hoffman's *Woodstock Nation* or Rubins' *Do It* look like formal philosophical dissertations awaiting defense before the evaluation committee. If, as Postman asserts, the style of show business the sax-blowing-President mainstream culture mimics is pure Vegas, the sixties counter-culture and its current offspring, ranging from the cut-and-paste zines to the images in the Alternative Inc. music papers, are a mere extension of Saturday morning cartoons; *Scooby-Doo* with cuss words and heroin and a cryptic hodge podge of irrational gibberish which, thanks to the worst excesses of the Beat writers, is now the official hallmark of profundity. Shed the *superficially* adult content, and its practically incidental social commentary, and *TAZ* would readily fit into the format of any of the current youth culture's hip biblical periodicals. His *Immediatism* reads like the secret tree-house manifesto of a little boy's club. Fortunately for Bey, his meagre audience never penetrates the affected outrageousness of his style to ever reach the 'content.' Recently in Italy a forged collection of unmitigated gibberish was published under Bey's name, yet a number of his loyal followers were incapable of deciphering the clear nonsense as a ruse, instead they fell over themselves praising his new heights of brilliance.

A telling stylistic trait ubiquitous in Bey's scrawl is the dismissive epitaph that something is 'boring.' "We declare the threat of nuclear annihilation is officially *boring*," he'll write

(I'm paraphrasing), echoing the *Beavis and Butthead* dismissive epitaph that something 'sucks.' The effect is identical to that of the pampered young prince irritated by a particular item of gravity a messenger has imposed on him, even though he was already tired and agitated with the same old routines of the court performers he'd been indifferently watching. Or the typical North American yawning through his fifth straight hour of sitcoms, mumbling a curse when his cramped fingers can't squeeze the remote fast enough to skip over the brief Oxfam PSA stupidly attempting to derail his apathy.

Bob Black, a self-conscious re-working of the Dostoyevsky character Stavrogin, is to social philosophy what pro-wrestling is to serious sports (serious sports being, as the Romans were quite aware, serious show biz). In Black's published hollerings, he dresses up his unworthy opponents in gross caricature, much like a WWF Arab, choreographs a few rowdy dance steps where the bad guy might even appear to land a few dangerous blows, then, with mean-spirited braggadocio (a literary substitute for Hulk Hogan's anabolic steroid intake), he decisively pile-drives the upstart into total submission. But, of course, a WWF Arab has absolutely nothing to do with real Arabs, and neither do the victims of Black's slander have anything to do with reality. Reading his Texas cage match 'critique' of Murray Bookchin, one is amazed the cunning 'Dean' has ever been allowed near pen and paper in the course of his lengthy career of intellectual quackery (the referee's always looking the other way, I guess!). Anyone remotely familiar with Bookchin's work would, upon reading Black's 'critique', instantly recall something like Trotsky's trial in absentia in 1936 (which was, of course, an example of the only show business in those dark days) and quickly move on to something a little more fruitful.[15]

Lest someone accuse your presiding and most humble master of ceremonies of taking similar liberties with poor Black and his tag-team partners, I would like to stress that the

only things meritorious in the work of the McAnarchists - and, in terms of spewing some obvious vitriol on the reigning order, there is some - can easily be found in far superior thinkers such as Chomsky, Goodman, those who Black describes as "tweedy British and Canadian anarchist intellectuals like Herbert Read, Alex Comfort and George Woodcock," "class struggle fundamentalists like Sam Dolgoff and Albert Meltzer," every McAnarchists' favourite whipping boy Murray Bookchin, and even bits of Marx (horrors!).[16] ("We sowed dragons' teeth," the above elders might lament, paraphrasing poet Irving Layton, "and reaped pygmies.") This is the real reason for the much ballyhooed anti-copyright status of McAnarchist works. The above "leftists residues" have not "faded out altogether," as Black claims, they've merely been plagiarized by an ungracious horde of dishonest play-rebels lacking the imagination or intellectual vigour to ever generate an original thought that might have some purpose beyond the amusement of their own jaded elitist clique.[17] As Goethe wrote:

Das Wahre war schon längst gefunden, . . .

Das alte Wahre, fass es an![18]

The McAnarchist's thirst for entertainment is not only something they share with the Woodstock Nation and the larger commercial culture it spawned following the ritual shedding of the flowers and beads, entertainment *uber alles* is perfectly consistent with the spirit of Stirner's Unique One, especially and explicitly in the realm of thought. "Free thinking [Stirner's term for traditional rational thought] puts *me* to work," laments Stirner, "for it is not I that am free, not I who put myself to work, but thinking is free and puts me to work. . . Totally different from this *free* thinking is *proprietary* thinking, *my* thinking, a thinking which does not lead me but is directed, continued, or broke off by me at my

pleasure." [19] Proprietary thinking as opposed to reason certainly is a satisfactory explanation for the wild leaps of logic and dubious scholarly practices prominent in McAnarchist 'discourse' such as Zerzan and *Fifth Estate's* George Bradford's fantasy anthropology, the cartoon Dada of Bey and Black's free use of Stalinist-style slander and conjuring damning evidence against his enemies out of thin air. But, unlike the 'free thinking' disdainful to Stirner which can be comprised of endless drudgery to insure one is getting things right (labour so arduous as, in the case of the present discussion, having to sift through an entire article by Paul Z. Simons), one unfortunate consequence of a body of thought built on the pursuit of orgiastic flights from reality in order to stave off the harrowing effects of familiarity and boredom is that one must adopt ever more outrageous positions if the proprietary thinker and his ego hope to maintain any level of stimulation. The result is a mindless concept of innovation for its own sake (most definitely *not* the Enlightenment notion of Progress where thought pursues truth or a freer society or a more penetrating critique of the present society - all of which is highly distasteful to the practicing McAnarchist). [20] Despite its iconoclastic pretensions, this is purely intellectualism formatted on marketing practices, particularly marketing to the fast flow of youth culture where the kids tire of the painted faces on their cd's within days; and it serves as another example of how McAnarchists share more with pop culture than with traditional radicalism. 'Serious' art has pursued a similar course this century; and though unable to produce much art worth serious *aesthetic* consideration, and despite all its self-conscious outlandishness, it has not only maintained close ties with bourgeois sorts eager for tax breaks (and that always much-coveted vicarious prestige), modern art has also succumbed to the homogenizing might of middle-class consumerism. Its bold pushing of envelopes has proved to have had all the insurrectionary might of a 'New and Improved' label on a detergent box; and in some cases, like that of Bill Burroughs, it now *is* the label

on the package. In the realm of literature, for example, fetishization of mutinous uses of language as a sign of iconoclastic authenticity, what Timothy Bewes calls "postmodern communication disorder", are as cliched and commonplace as the "break all the rules" and "change is good" revolutionary advice piled high on the business and self-help shelves of the bookstores. Bey, with his own bold assaults on the limits of language and a daring that was already predictable in 1969, represents the most consistent imitation of a commodity in this way; and like all overexposed products where the allure is supposed to be shocking novelty rather than intellectual viability, he's beginning his inevitable slide into the delete bins and liquidation warehouses of what passes for a counterculture these days. In their defence, poor playful, proprietary thinking McAnarchists can hardly be blamed for their glaring limitations when whole schools of what are supposed to be our assiduous full-time scholars, in gaudy displays of postmodern intellectual one-upmanship, have been reduced to a sort of pretentious *Jerry Springer Show* for middle-class academics who love a good in-joke (not that, with their deep roots in shopping plazas and television programming, they would be qualified to do much else).

The self-motivational High Priests and Priestesses of the business seminar circuits, despite all their sermons about Extreme solutions to pushing the profit envelope, are firmly fettered to the hard facts of production schedules, commitments to shareholders, and getting that plant to Mexico before the unions can organize a product boycott. Lacking any actual influence on concrete reality, the McAnarchists have been free to amass a whole wealth of Extreme proprietary thoughts that are not only 'new and improved' in relation to the tiresome 'free thinking' of traditional radicalism, but also, as is decorous for Extreme radicals, they're, well, Extreme (not to mention childish, simplistic, reductionistic and hysterically laughable in most every detail). Here are a few examples:

- The Urban Nightmare has spawned endless abominations, therefore the response of McAnarchists like Zerzan and the *Fifth Estate* Comedy Review is to urge for a speedy return to the trees - "We can either passively continue on the road to utter domestication or turn in the direction of joyful upheaval, passionate and feral embrace of wildness and life that aims at dancing on the ruins of clocks, computers and that failure of imagination and will called work." [21] - never mind that all we know about Eden and its own has arisen out of investigative practices and academic disciplines which have developed concomitantly with a devious product of civilization called the university, not that Bradford or Zerzan are overly concerned with what we *know* about primal cultures, preferring to practice something that, if their specious gaze were directed into the future rather than the past, would properly be labelled science fiction. And one thing we know about Eden is it most certainly never existed. Note: this represents one of the least original brands of "proprietary thinking" among McAnarchists - Pol Pot already attempted a "passionate and feral embrace of wildness" which, for a time, did succeed in "dancing on the ruins" of civilization. Zerzan and *Fifth Estate* would probably owe substantial royalties were not the intellectual property laws in South East Asia in such sorry disarray.
- Technological developments have included such horrors as the Hiroshima bomb, therefore the McAnarchists declare that nothing less than the abolition of all sophisticated technology is the solution, yet in a grand act of bad faith they

continue to ship their revolutionary proclamations via airplane after the volatile pages have been spit from the fiery flying rollers of that drudgery saving device the printing press. Why isn't each copy of *Anarchy* (sic) *AJDA* or *Fifth Estate* a lovingly handwritten manuscript; is not the cause, and pain-staking authenticity, worth a few months of agonizing hand-cramps?

- The McAnarchist makes the impressive discovery that language is in fact symbolic (!) and a human-made projection onto the world (!) and , therefore, is not always in perfect harmony with the world (!) and, worse, used by bosses to make us do bad things to ourselves and each other. Thus, in a very linear and symbolic fashion, Zerzan champions a return to an animistic consciousness "or madness and death,"[22] and Hakim Bey calls for "voluntary illiteracy." [23] Yet, as they themselves somewhat demonstrate, in spite of the sublime, tumultuous downward spiral of self-negation they unleash, language, and especially history's finest displays of language, is quite potent enough to facilitate attacks on the forms of madness and death bosses and other undesirables have been known to perpetrate. In fact, contra Zerzan, Brazil's peasants *were actually easier to oppress when they remained illiterate*, which is exactly why educators like Paulo Freire - those "condescending organizers of the poor"[24] - have never been popular among dictators. (McAnarchists have never even been *noticed* by anyone, least of all dictators.) Furthermore, it's difficult to discern how language would not also be a highly advantageous tool in dealing with Eden's perfectly natural phenomena (of which, according to Zerzan, language is not an example, despite every fact to the contrary) that can be problematic to one's survival such as mambo snakes, polio viruses, and earthquakes. (But then again, to maintain any internal consistency,

what is now Zerzan, going far beyond the symbol that now stands for what was Prince, should be swinging from tree to tree to personally grunt his vision to hopeful converts).

- Reason was employed by Hitler to orderly arrange the cinder-blocks of Auschwitz; therefore reason, *reasons* the McAnarchist, must be speedily jettisoned from the McAnarchist republic. However, the McAnarchists, and Foucault, reason incredibly poorly if they conclude that the hateful primitive mysticism and death worship at the core of Naziism is the culmination of the Enlightenment or has anything at all to do with rationality. Fascism has far more in common with the primitive impulse to knock out the brains of a stranger with a stone club, a universal vice among the children of Eden Zerzan and *Fifth Estate* insist we emulate, than it does with a gesture in the true spirit of progressive Enlightenment ideals, an example of which might be the Spanish anarchists's widespread attempt to master Esperanto so they might diminish those misunderstandings among strangers which could lead to the knocking out of each other's brains.
- Because public schools, prisons, government, and Hollywood are all social institutions, the McAnarchists stand in defiance of *all* social institutions - "Now that society's false opposition [leftism] has breathed its last, the time has come to do the same to society itself (sic)."[25] This is a bizarre comment when the Western tradition of dissent - Eden's traditions of dissent were very short lived, not because of the terribly swift stone clubs doing violence to the brains of dissidents but because individuation only ever occurs in highly sophisticated and diverse cultures - to which the McAnarchists, in their own peculiar ungracious way, claim

to have a provisional affiliation, could represent an example of institution, if by institution we mean a repository of accumulated collective wisdom that persists through time independently of the contributions it acquired from particular individuals. However, any attempt to systematically apply such bodies of collective wisdom to society - for example, to construct something like Francisco Ferrer's Modern School, devoted to creating free individuals rather than shoppers for the malls and automata for the workplace - is denounced by McAnarchists as an incident of thinly veiled Stalinist collectivism, an unacceptable impingement on their right to exist according to personal whimsy. "The social world is certainly the work of men," Vico announced in 1725; but the emancipatory implications of this and other Enlightenment insights - specifically the notion that, instead of waiting on the mood-swings of the gods, we can consciously create a social world which nurtures its participants rather than feeds them to governing elites - remain at odds with the Manichaeic vision and capriciousness of the McAnarchists.[26] Is it not also curious that America, a people devoted to unwavering vigilance against the self-denying forces of despotic collectivization and the celebration of the self-reliant, rugged John Wayne individualist, has, from its generals and its corporate CEO's down to its street gangstas and Extreme radicals, been able to achieve such blanket, homogenous, *collective* consensus on their mass individuality?

Thus the Brand X radical truly has little hope of competing against the daring New and Improved insurrectionary visions for offer in the McAnarchist Emporium of the Extreme (which would probably make for a tent almost as popular as the penis-piercing booth at the next Lollapalooza).

As mentioned earlier, another area exposing the desperate need among McAnarchists for a little remedial Aristotle is on the subject of work. They were not the first to criticize work (in fact, I thought *I* was the first time the flesh was flailed from my hands), but they are the first to call for its abolishment and replacement by play (that is, the first if we refrain from including the emperors, monarchs, industrialists, movie stars *et al.* who have throughout the ages managed to bully or swindle some unsuspecting population into doing not only their drudgery for them, but some surplus drudgery for the sake of a crown jewel or comparable extravagance). As mentioned previously, only could a species of creature that from the larvae stage has become accustomed to consuming 75% of the earth's resources in the form of plastic playland trinkets and festive images of animated rodents, created by the other three quarters of humanity - principally coloured humanity - enslaved by corporate colonialists and forced to subsist on 15% of available resources; in short, only the most spoiled squalling brats on god's green earth could possibly conceive of a condition of eternal play as it represents an idealized logical extension of their existing value structures. Blindness to the plight of the bulk of the human race aside for the moment, an effortless chore for most northerners, including their McAnarchist sons and daughters in states of rebellion, one wonders if, on the night he turned police informant, Bob Black had been shot full of holes, he would have liked to have been rushed to Play Hospital where the surgeons, wishing not to compromise their individuality, or worse, suffer boredom, had only studied medicine for an afternoon, a short afternoon at that, preferring to wonder off to a pub when they encountered some words they couldn't make out because one of them had passed out with a little Thai weed still smouldering between his lips and set the dictionary ablaze Well, even most McAnarchists are not this naive, but turning away from their future Thai-weed scented utopias and to their *work* in progress, the McAnarchists' worship of Play has already had catastrophic consequences

for their 'scholarship'. Their wild leaps of logic, conjectures based on sloppy reading of data, quoting of sources who would be horrified to hear of the service they've been pressed into (Hakim Bey's convulsive misunderstanding of Nietzsche has only ever been rivalled by certain fascist circles), and incestuous self-validation (gushing praise by Peter Lamborn Wilson, another name used by Bey, is quoted on the jackets for Bey's books!) gives, by comparison, the guests on the *Art Bell Show* a veneer of thorough erudition. A frequent critique the McAnarchists level against serious scholarship mining related veins is that they almost always avoid any mention of McAnarchism (go figure); yet when they do receive mention outside of their own dogmatic inbred network (although only their sworn enemies are ideologues, of course), the consensus is that their research is invariably shoddy, to put it as diplomatically as possible. But again, despite all their self-imposed iconoclastic credentials, their template for their intellectual efforts is the anti-intellectual commercial culture they've sworn to reduce to rubble. Replace key words in most McAnarchist writing with Smashing Pumpkins and Sloan, or *Pulp Fiction* and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, and what effortlessly appears is the lazy, highly subjective scrawl of play-rebel middle-class youth entertainment magazines and zines that the McAnarchist devoured in his/her formative years.

Space limitations prevent a detailed comparison, but suffice for the moment to draw attention to the wanton ahistoricism of pop culture forums which condemn to the field of palaeontology anything that has been on the market for longer than a weekend. Like the whole of the status quo in this End of History epoch - ranging from the global economists to the political pundits to the postmodernist snake-oil hustlers to the kids who already see Kurt Cobain as a *Jurassic Park* exhibit - McAnarchists regard historical study as deleterious to the revolutionary mind (*pre*-historical events, and beat writers, are, like scripture and Nostrodamus, cryptic enough to be worked into any context and are

therefore approved, although strict adherence to the doctrine of "voluntary illiteracy" may render these vague pearls of wisdom somewhat useless). Vico was simply among the first to assert that not only can the study of history embolden and fortify the radical mind, it might even create a revolutionary mind where it did not exist before. One of many ironies of this McAnarchist ploy to avoid making their work too work-like is that, by recoiling from a modicum of effort, they're failing to inherit the results of work already done in the past. On the topic of literary studies, Paul Goodman writes:

. . . starting from scratch, without literary tradition altogether, writing and reading are imbecile and trivial; ancient errors are tiresomely repeated; platitudes are taken for ideas; hard won distinctions are lost; useful genres have to be reinvented, like reinventing shoes or learning to boil water. [27]

The McAnarchists' deficits in literary understanding are merely embarrassing; for example, nobody associated with *Anarchy* (sic) *AJDA* seems to have noticed that the magazine's "whirligig of time" motto is actually from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Far more serious and plentiful are the sloppy crimes of omission and distortion they've committed against the understanding of traditional anarchist philosophies.

Besides discovering re-inventions of the wheel, often in the shape of a battered square, the only positives that can be gleaned from McAnarchist 'thought' is their vivid exemplary dramatization of the fact that to study history is to encounter levels of accomplishment against which one must measure themselves if they have any authentic concern for the area of interest and desire its furtherance. Someone like Bookchin is drawn and quartered by a ravenous pack of McAnarchists with a great deal of clamour and bluster but never in adherence to the consistently solid intellectual standards Bookchin himself maintains (just

try to pursue Zerzan's notes, or *any* of Black's), and this is precisely because any genuine intellectual work requires actual *work* but never enough play for the energetic young 'proprietary thinking' McAnarchist [28] (Their problem could also be, to turn to Goodman again, "they cannot read English very well: the conditions of modern life have so alienated them from history, from the professions, and even the nature of things, that they do not understand what a humanistic writer is saying." [29]) Similarly, little wonder a McAnarchist would advise against looking at the historical record when a hopeful convert likely might encounter a brace of Magons and Seisdedos - examples of courage and heroism that would quite effortlessly expose Hakim Bey's trenchant calls to hold an Immediatist feast, complete with "all food in Black & Red (sic) in honour of anarchy," as another illustration of how exhaustive the yuppification of America has been. [30]

But being an unconscious expression of the dominant culture, McAnarchism has no real desire to align itself with what is courageous and heroic or even radical for that matter. McAnarchism, in keeping with the latest Alternative Inc. pop culture trends, is tongue-in-cheek radicalism, like the plague of pathologically self-conscious bands who are too cool to display enthusiasm on stage so they deliberately alienate themselves from the task at hand; and, with many a smug giggle and wink, parody the gestures, stage patter and music of traditional performers; ultimately because, as children of affluence, they've gorged themselves on too much entertainment - *everybody's* supposed to have seen it all a hundred times - and it's difficult to be moved when overindulgence is merely a part of a routine taken for granted (Erving Goffman's concept of 'role distancing' awaits fruitful application here by some enterprising student of sociology). [31] Moreover, the brash, venomous, often cruel tone of McAnarchist 'discourse', being much more than a combative front to mask their pathetic latent cowardice and utter triviality before the ghosts of revolutionary movements of the past, is yet another incidence of their being

swept along by the larger mean-spirited "Smack My Bitch Up" commercial culture. This modern homage to the mediaeval practice of dressing up the witches on death row as clowns to minimize sympathy in hooting onlookers - ranging from Limbaugh's bag lady jokes (the bag lady being a modern day witch) to the iconography of serial killers to the rhetorical grunts of any professional athlete - is so obviously a vital component of any system of indoctrination working to insure the survival of a superpower, especially a superpower sworn to defend the savagery of competitive market economics; and it is testimony to the sheer might of America's ability to so comprehensively inculcate its hollow imperial values that even its self-styled radicals are helpless to prevent furthering its interests. When Bob Black, like his Woodstock mentors of yore, is forced to go respectable, he can point with pride to the dishonest, caustic frenzy of his written work when he finds himself applying for a position at General Motors' personnel department when they're gearing up for another round of mass firings, or attempting to hire on as a gag-writer for Howard Stern, or with some of the police connections he's recently begun to cultivate, he might even be able to work as a morale officer for the CIA agents making places like Haiti and Peru safe for Tarantino's cinematic studies in sensitivity or other Hollywood celebrations of America's remorseless brute muscle.

Such gaping blind-spots in the fabric of the McAnarchist 'intellect' (not to mention whimsy, deceit, plagiarism, precocious polysyllabic pretensions, and viciousness) are much more than the embarrassing legacy of America's failure to provide even basic universal education at this point in its history. Bradford and Zerzan's wish to share a tree-house and hide from the scary tools only the big kids are grown up enough to use; their further desire to somehow forever see the world freshly through the virgin eyes of a newborn baby; Bey's insistence on inhabiting a cut and paste and sparkly stuff enchanted world where pixie philosophers like himself are free to scribble Colour-Me-Rebel

juvenilia for the rest of their days; Black's urging us all to keep playing because somehow, with a hearty enough wail, a pair of plump breasts (milk on the left, beer on the right) will always appear; and then there's the bitter fact that the only true *healthy* egoist who's ever crawled across Stirner's world, and must have been the model for his Unique One (unless it was the less than healthy strain of egoist represented by either the freelance or the imperial psychotic murderer), is the human infant existing as pure, unmediated will, incapable of comprehending other beings also inhabit its world - these basic tenants of McAnarchist egoism cannot help but lead one to reach the inescapable conclusion that these people desperately want their childhood's back:

"Come away, O human child!

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand

For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand."

Although some valuable literature has mined this theme (though in the case of Yeats, responsible for the above quote, his most valuable work came with maturation) this is hardly the stuff revolutions are made of. In fact, the priests and kings throughout history have referred to their subjects as their children for every reason but to encourage the demise of their positions of privilege.

"Among the young," writes Zerzan, "there are quite a few examples of a tendency to regress or turn back." [32] Yet, the Wild Man of Oregon fails to notice, and even some of suburbia's blinkered own have noticed, via best-sellers like Robert Bly's *The Sibling Society*, that the now middle-aged baby-boomers have, for some time, been fashionably

promulgating a culture of extreme infantile regression which has extended far beyond the actual young. From the school-yard name-calling that passes for political debate, to the epidemic of *Batman* and *Flintstone* cinema marketed primarily towards adults, to broadcasting a war against Iraq as if it were a sporting event, there should be no need to elaborate on how profitable it has become to encourage spoiling the much venerated, and for all intents and purposes *outer*, inner child. "We need children as teachers, not students," chirps cub-revolutionary Bob Black, echoing his Woodstock elders, "They have a lot to contribute to the ludic revolution because they're better at playing than grown-ups are. Adults and children are not identical but they will become equal through interdependence. Only play can bridge the generation gap." [33] And only a devotion to play can insure a steady stream of moronic goods flows from the malls. A state of perpetual childhood replete with bottomless wish lists is precisely what corporate Santas such as Microsoft and Disney have already created in a consumerist recasting of the traditional paternalistic relationship between ruler and subject, boss and peon. Curiously, one of Paterson's conclusions regarding the layered jumble of contradictions and inconsistencies of Stirner's 'system' is that the grand old egoist was basically having a good lark: "It is clearly arguable that *Der Einzige*, despite its philosophical terminology and its apparent pretensions to dialectical cogency, is essentially a work of autobiographical fiction," or, in other words, a form of philosophical dress-up and game playing. [34]

In a society celebrating a universal condition of infantile regression it should come as little shock that much intellectual work is performed in the sandbox. Postmodernist academics, the intellectual pride and joy of information age capitalism, continue to have little to offer beyond the spectacle of pampered middle-class brats swinging on semantic monkey-bars a long, *long* way from any dangerous traffic like mass alienation, impending ecological collapse or the steady immiserization of a Third World enslaved to provide cheap

components for Camile Paglia's computer. (Why, after all the white-collar capital which has been poured into the academy has Suburbia's brightest not yet been able to even discuss drawing the outline of a field of *applied* postmodernism - excluding applying postmodernism to the act of securing a profitable professorship?) The future looks no more promising; but one interesting, hitherto neglected area for further research in the contemporary university is Stirner's secret status as a pioneering postmodernist. "He who cannot rid himself of thoughts," decrees the champion of irrationalist 'proprietary' thinking, "is to that extent still a man, still the slave of that human institution, language, that treasury of human thoughts. Language or 'the word' tyrannizes hardest over us, because it brings us up against a whole army of fixed ideas." [35] Note again how little Stirner has to do with any self-respecting anarchist but how highly prophetic and approving he is of the dark age that is now descending upon the Humanities.

Applied McAnarchism, too, is an oxymoron. Besides heckling any form of social activism they might notice (and when you sleep as late as these people, noticing anything beyond their own dirty sheets is quite a feat in itself), they are, as mentioned above, utterly mute on the subject of action, a position perfectly consistent with that of St. Max:

Unlike the anarchist, who will be satisfied with nothing less than the historic dissolution of the State and the final overthrow of the tyranny of law, Stirner's Unique One sees no reason to injure himself by a public crusade against authority when his ends can just as well be achieved by cheating the State and evading its laws. The Unique One only troubles himself about political oppression when he personally is among those who are oppressed.[36]

This unconditional refusal to soil one's hands suggests several responses to a world gone mad, the first of which involves Hannah Arendt's use of the concept of 'inner emigration',

that rationalization of complicity German intellectuals (and, in a far less sophisticated form, even among some commanders of the mobile SS death units) employed to justify their lack of open opposition to the Reich. Its most succinct expression appears as, "I was always *secretly* against the Nazis." Timothy Bewes, in his sometimes brilliant *Cynicism and Postmodernity*, states:

Inner emigration, the recourse to introspection in the face of an apparently unnegotiable political summons, is a variation upon the flight into aesthetic or intellectual solitude. Inner emigration and the lofty perch inhabited by the 'man of integrity' share two illusions: (i) that their contempt for the world they are forced to inhabit is greater and more exacting than that of anybody around them - that their standards are higher than those of the world; and (ii) that their depth, as subjects, is profound and unquestionably authentic - too authentic for them to function adequately in a world of superficiality.[37]

And the higher standards of contempt and the profound "too authentic" depth embodied in such visions as Black's Workless Paradise, Bradford and Zerzan's return to Eden and Bey's Party-Hardy Politics, by nature of their outlandish and deliberate utopian unrealizability, further insures and rationalizes the paralysis to which they've devoted themselves and encourage others to embrace. It should not be necessary to add that this form of quietism, especially among self-professed radicals, represents a form of complicity with the orchestrators of the reigning madness.

Paradoxically, the McAnarchists' form of inner emigration and refusal to participate on the begriming and potentially dangerous level of action represents yet another manifestation of their unconscious debt to the wider culture against which they so fiercely wail. Only two sorts of person have ever managed to keep dirt from beneath their fingers: firstly, he who's managed to coerce somebody else into doing his chores for him; and as we've

already seen, for this reason alone McAnarchism could never be conceived of in the mind of a Thai child gluing the soles of Nike runners. And secondly, in the vernacular of *Sesame Street* fun-learn, grown-ups work, kids play. One reason the McAnarchists' contempt for the world is greater, their standards higher, their profound depth "too authentic" to participate in the world is because the "lofty perch" they inhabit is, like most of the imagery consumerist forces are using to bludgeon the modern mind, erected on paeans to a perpetual, resurrected childhood. Whereas the actual product beneath the enchanted imagery of commercial propaganda never compensates for the suffering in the workplace the consumer must endure to purchase it, McAnarchism's utopia, its proposed product, is also a non-starter by virtue of its myriad proposals to defy existential reality and return to a condition of never ending childhood. In fact, Zerzan's pleas for a return to Eden can be seen as nothing more than a call to return to humankind's infancy, or at least an idealized, utterly fictitious account of that infancy.[38] The McAnarchist unconscious fits into the contours of the infantile regression afflicting the dominant culture so neatly, one marvels at how the likes of Faith Popcorn have been able to subliminally shape the thoughts of *Anarchy* (sic) *AJDA*'s editorial staff.

Idolatry of play (just as foolish as the marxist idolatry of work but, as the hippies so aptly demonstrated, without any revolutionary potential) and an ahistorical hostility to the elders they've ungraciously plagiarized (right down to denouncing an idea because its originator was aged! - *all* McAnarchists hope to die before they get old!) have thus far been identified as two characteristics McAnarchism shares with the infantile regressiveness of the larger American consumerist culture (which itself might be analogized as a big vicious insatiable brat that has bullied the rest of the world's inhabitants into giving up their lunch money). But one of the most sinister and destructive consequences of a universal youth culture stretching well into middle age is the resultant fits of sibling rivalry and

widespread hostility toward *actual* children. Little should have to be said about the record incidents of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, commercial and military enslavement, and sexual exploitation plaguing the children of the Third World; and, to facilitate bigger bonuses for the CEO's of cruelly over-taxed trans-nationals, conditions for children, especially those already living in poverty, are beginning to deteriorate in the wealthier nations of the northern hemisphere as well. Furthermore, though the situation is nothing like that of a Brazil, where each year several thousand "bodies of children murdered by death squads are found outside metropolitan areas with their hands tied, showing signs of torture, riddled with bullet holes,"[39] youths in this society are increasingly cast in the role of all-purpose scapegoat for a rapidly decaying society by pro-caning neo-conservatives, the same right-wing visionaries who applaud the competitive spirit of an economy that necessitates both parents work staggered shifts thus leaving kids to raise themselves with little guidance beyond the blazing fusillades of every neo-cons favourite assault rifle-toting film star Arnold Schwarzenegar. Framed within this explicit hostility toward and fear of ten-year olds with Uzis, subtler antagonism toward children is rampant. A recent television commercial shows a little girl crying in a crowded rush-hour subway car. Fellow travellers, their Prozac beginning to wear off after a savage day at the office, are on the verge of throttling her as her mother tries in vain to quiet her. Finally, the ad's hero, sitting next to the pair, inserts a cd-rom glimmering with images of snarling dinosaurs into his lap-top and, as the girl's bewitchment becomes total, saves the day - at least until he arrives at his station and has to rush off, leaving the child to resume her wailings while the remaining passengers glare after the departing hero and contemplate eating the child raw. Besides hyping another electronic pacifier (in itself a form of child abuse, now resulting in incalculable damage to the minds of ensuing generations) an obvious premise of the ad is that children are shrill social lepers. (At the other extreme,

Germaine Greer recently discussed an ad similarly portraying a group of elderly women as equally repulsive outcasts in this culture of beautiful young child-adults.)

True to their uncanny ability to unconsciously mimic all things mainstream, McAnarchists are also vitriolic in their denunciations of childhood. In the pages of *Anarchy* (sic) *AJDA*, a particularly muddled McAnarchist by the name of Laure Akai - a Russian victim of the Great Globalization Plague - recently announced, "I know many people - whose lives consist of getting married, having kids and dying - who are 'fulfilled'. But I'd rather have a wide range of experience." [40] (She goes on to add and unwittingly betray the unconscious shopping mall template for her McAnarchism, "I must be sick, like the consumer who must try 100 different brands of toothpaste.") Akai clearly equates having children, as well as being involved in a caring relationship of some duration (marriage is an awfully loaded term), the absence of which almost invariably has an adverse effect on any children involved, is something that prevents 'fulfillment' and is synonymous with death. In other words Akai, like other McAnarchists, shares plenty with what Compaq sees as its customer base, she shares plenty with the deadbeat (usually swingin' guy) parties contributing to the runaway phenomena of the single (and usually impoverished female) parent, she shares much with the yuppie couples who avoided having children so as not to poison the earning-abilities of their careers, and she even shares something with the parents who have passively accepted a world where their children will be raised by day-care staff, indifferent teachers, and electronic and digital pap. (I'm not for one second suggesting that only by having children can a person be 'fulfilled', only that having children is anything but an unfulfilling form of lingering slow suicide.)

Judging from her jumbled Hunter S. Thompson punk prose, Akai is presently immersed in that very temporary condition of youth, and one wonders if in a decade she will still be in

favour of mandatory abortions for all pregnant women. More than likely, though, if she herself has consciously let the biological clock run-out because she was already immersed in something fulfilling (I know how unbearably trite and marmish this must sound to the Empire's fierce little rebels, resplendent in their hemp and leather togas as they lethargically contemplate another night of anal sex - "Jeez, Laure, I'm so *bored* with all the same old orifices!"), she will, I hope, at least have known women who have not followed suit yet managed to achieve fulfillment with out any loss of self-respect. Interestingly enough, female McAnarchists do not appear to have very lengthy careers as propagators of the faith. The ubiquity and long standing permanence of Black, Bey, Bradford, and Zerzan are testimonies to McAnarchism fundamentally being a boy's club in the most regressive sense. And little wonder given the most blatant objection to Stirner's egoism would have to be that no pregnant woman (nor any worthy mother or father of a young child) could in good faith refer to herself as a Unique One. "The dissolution of society in every form," demands St. Max, "State, nation, *family*, humanity, etc., is the necessary condition for the solitary individual, the egoist, to come into his own and to live an authentic life." [emphasis added][41] How little Unique One's are ever to learn to become big Unique One's without any social structure to guide them, why big Unique One's would bother extending themselves to the pain-staking task of educating little Unique One's ("for me no one, not even my fellow-man, is a person to be respected . . . but solely an *object* . . . an interesting or uninteresting object, useful or useless."[42]), how big Unique One's even know they are Unique Ones and go about sustaining their Unique Oneness; and how really unique *is* the member of a society where everybody is a Unique One (not very, if one looks at modern day America, the world's current shining beacon of vulgar individualism) - these are minor questions when the governing principals of the Republic of the Unique One cannot possibly permit a pregnant woman to refer to herself as a Unique One whilst

she willingly keeps a living parasite in her body. Though such cases do occur, invariably with tragic results, a woman deserving the designation 'mother' cannot possibly regard her child as a mere object, "interesting or uninteresting, useful or useless." A male too would have to shed his status as a Unique One were he to be a father. The Unique One's Republic would appear to condemn the human race to certain extinction, and in less time than the elites of the reigning order are working towards.

The place of children and the role of parents in a free society is perhaps the most important issue dividing the egoist and the anarchist or, to use the loaded McAnarchist term, collectivist versions of the social. The form of selflessness embodied in nurturing impulses, specifically the maternal instinct - which is not to assert, like certain half-baked feminists and contemporary goddess cultists, women have a monopoly on nurturing capacities - is the natural source of altruistic, caring, civilized behaviour (and that's *civilized* meant in a sense that does not confuse the retention of numerous primitive modes of destructive stone-on-skull conflict resolution behaviour with the human potentialities civilization should in fact be attempting to fulfil; *civilized* in the sense of having the capacity to, in a relationship of reciprocity, share in the humanness of the other). This extension beyond oneself is the inspiration for building social institutions that could likewise nurture all the members of a society and foster the development of whole individuals. Yet somehow the McAnarchist equates this with Stalin's liquidation of the *kulaks* and collectivization at gun-point. Such a Herculean display of distortion calls for a psychoanalytic probe of the darkest recesses of the McAnarchist mind to unearth what esoteric concept of 'nurturing' lurks beneath. I recall a Bob Black book that began with (no, not a list of names for the police) but a reproduction of several documents suggesting his childhood was a series of negative psychiatric evaluations and enforced regimes of tranquilizing pharmaceuticals, all sanctioned, and probably instigated, by his loving

parents - little wonder why there might be some misunderstanding concerning notions of nurturing behaviour. The earliest study of baboons was undertaken at the London Zoo and concluded the world of the baboon was a never ending plague of bloody violence. A few years later investigators observed baboons in their natural habitat; and they discovered that, though the primates were certainly aggressive in their rituals which established group hierarchies, incidents of physical injury were extremely rare. The bloody violence was, in fact, a consequence of their incarceration in the London Zoo (specifically, their cage lacked the physical space to permit the retreats that were supposed to follow the aggressive rituals, as well as caging together animals from different groups without any respect to their familiar hierarchies). Similarly, the McAnarchists have been observing cities, symbolic thought, technology, and other social phenomena, including parenthood and family, perversely warped by the corporatist/consumerist cage; and, in an extraordinary yet predictable feat of reductionism, they've dismissed all that emanates, or more correctly *potentially* emanates, from social institutions as inherently oppressive and a vile impingement on the free individual. Aware of the impossibility of the task, and idiot approbations of the feral child aside, McAnarchists have never bothered to give an account as to how they foresee the making of the Individual given the lengthy duration of parental dependency of the infant Homo sapiens and the even longer period of socialization.

To be fair, it should be noted that McAnarchists are not entirely silent on the subject of childhood. Accolades to the paedophile and NAMBLA propaganda, in bold outpourings of libertine prowess making the connoisseurs of rebel anal sex prudish by comparison, are far from uncommon in the pages of *Anarchy* (sic) *AJDA*. Thus, the McAnarchist shares yet another thing with the stockholders of DOW chemicals - a burning desire to screw the next generation.

What is particularly infuriating about the McAnarchists and their "too authentic" pseudo-anarchism, doomed to a self-righteous quietism only interrupted by opportunities to ridicule committed activists, is that when anarchists of the past have discussed a future society free of oppressive social relationships, the most perceptive have always left ample room for the unapologetic odd-ball (although I don't recall they've ever condoned the child-molester). The Spanish Anarchists, by way of one example, in their Saragossa congress of 1936 adopted a resolution whereby 'naturists' (something like the contemporary neo-luddite) and nudists should be encouraged to create the communities they felt they required: "the new society should assure each commune of all the agricultural and industrial elements necessary for its autonomy, in accordance with the biological principle which affirms that the man, and in this case commune, is most free, who has least need of others." [43] Zerzan and the *Fifth Estate* troop could strip naked and, swinging from branch to branch, grunt their way to what they perceive to be an unalienated existence; Bey and company could have their neo-hippy potlatches (although one would expect culinary arts practiced on the basis of chaos theory might result in many a burnt dish); and a perpetually hung-over Black, passed out in his sandbox, sand in his diaper and a vomit-filled pink beach-bucket squeezed over his head, could sleep as late as he wanted. (Although I suspect hunger pangs and a dearth of female companionship are two factors that would eventually terminate the experiment.) But the fact of the matter is, despite a commercial propaganda system attempting to turn us all into covetous spoiled children, most people want at the core of their existence that 'unfulfilling' illusion so vilified by Akai, meaningful intimate relationships and, more often than not, children. (Without question, the full range of most people's potentialities have been viciously stunted by the present order; and in a genuinely free society, it should not have to be added, members would be encouraged and assisted in their efforts to become far more

than what capitalist systems of production and consumption require of them, and that includes being mere livestock for purposes of breeding more Wal-Mart cashiers or more gaping mouths awaiting Disney's banality.) Moreover, any authentic change to the present nightmare would firstly require immense upheaval in the prevailing attitudes and values and material conditions of 'regular' men and women ensnared by and, at the same time, contributing to the smooth functioning of the nightmare; the same people the McAnarchists, in homage to the aristocratic models they unconsciously emulate, typically refer to in the 'mob' or 'swinish multitude' reactionary vernacular of an Edmund Burke. Appeals to the inner paedophile, the deification of the neanderthal and his tool kit, casting "children as teachers," Hakim Bey's brainless hippy New Ageism ('democratic shamanism!') - none of these strategies are likely to gain much sympathy among the mobs of Akai's living dead. Recollecting the dada antics of the yippies sober enough to hit the streets in protest during the sixties, or looking at today's soft-headed neo-panteists, particularly the Earth Firsters!, it should be clear that social activism founded on extremist gestures of anti-intellectual, Party Politic infantile regression - and systematic avoidance of the toil and sacrifice which went into every social struggle of the past (historical models of rebellion are "deaf to the music & lack all sense of rhythm," explains Bey![44]) - readily play into the hands of reactionary forces and undermine legitimate efforts to appeal to the positive impulses within the typical man or woman of the 'mob'. [45] Had the working class Okies from Muskogee of the 1960's not been so joyfully alienated by the enlightened acid gurus and tie-dyed bacchanalias financed by dad's money from the suburbs, more than just a big party in a farmer's field would be the legacy of the era. [46]

McAnarchism's bombastic showmanship and extremist grandstanding for a select audience of mall and TV bred decadents, culled from the richest nations history has ever seen, so vividly mimics the dominant corporatist/consumerist culture, it can only be seen

as an unconscious endorsement, especially in light of its ongoing, less than honest attempts to discredit and ridicule sincere radicals and dissidents, both past and present, committed to affecting positive changes in a world gone profoundly array. Unless, of course, the endorsement is *conscious*; and the McAnarchists' publications, while subliminally reasserting the underlying values of the larger culture, are merely repositories for the names of young gullibles with radical leanings so Bob Black can, through channels he knows intimately, transfer to the proper authorities for future reference. Any McAnarchist committed to real social change would put away her/his childish things and embrace serious anarchism or let all hopes of confronting the present state of mass insanity slip away.

September 1998

NOTES

1. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), p. 64.
2. Debord, p. 62.
3. R.W.K. Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist Max Stirner* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 144.
4. Paterson, p. 144.
5. Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 174.

6. Herbert Read, *Anarchy & Order* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), pp. 151-52.
7. "Anarchist Press Review," *Anarchy A Journal of Desire Armed*, No. 44 (1997), p. 9.
8. Maria Mitchell, "Talk Dirty To Me," *Anarchy AJDA*, No. 44 (1997), p.15.
9. John Zerzan, "We Have To Dismantle All This," *Anarchy AJDA*, No. 41 (1995), p. 69.
10. Zerzan has recently announced the Unabomber offers a model for action palatable to his lofty standards. Whether or not random acts of violence by lone hermits can in itself accomplish revolutionary ends - and the history of anarchism suggests the answer is probably *not* - is hardly the issue when Zerzan himself has never once articulated a single thought on realistic social activism, let alone get his own hands dirty, unless, from the safety of his willow-branch armchair, it's to denounce something like Chomsky's donation of funds to Portland's Freedom and Mutual Aid anarchist centre so they could purchase, what to neo-primitivists is that most counter-revolutionary of gadgets, a computer system (similar, one most suppose, to the one's that assisted Ted Kaczynski in having his manifesto published around the world on the same day). Innate cowards of the McAnarchist variety are too busy making hash brownies or their genitals sticky to ever make bombs, and their attempt to clamber atop a Unabomber bandwagon is thoroughly burlesque.
11. Jacques Benoit, "Movies Worth Watching: Animal House," *Vue Weekly*, May 7-13, 1998, p.26.
12. Hakim Bey, "Immediatism," *Drunken Boat*, No. 2 (1994), p. 56.
13. Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p. 553.

14. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 4-5.

15. To seriously respond to Black's (and *Anarchy AJDA's*) utterly fictitious Bookchin show trial would be as colossal a waste of energy as would devising a systematic critique of the Flat Earth Society. (Bookchin *high income*? Bookchin a *college professor/bureaucrat*? Bookchin a member of the *bourgeoisie*? A *Marxist*? A *what?*) But the one thing that must be stated is the amplitude of psychotic projection in which Black, by every account a ranting, egomaniacal Hitlerite in anarchist's clothing, indulges. The ability to project a so uniquely diseased personality onto someone entirely at odds with such disturbing personal characteristics truly does have historical parallels only in the 'treatment' of dissidents in the psychiatric institutions of the Soviet Union, where, too, the asylum's gatekeepers were the ones on the wrong side of the padded doors. Black's show trials - malicious acts of sublimated blind revenge fuelled by nagging bitterness toward the psychiatric injustices inflicted on him as a child? Redirection of the rage burning his brain ever since the producers of *The Jerry Springer Show* rejected putting he and his family on air for being too dysfunctional? Only his therapist knows for certain. And Black probably ate him last week.

16. Bob Black, "Murray Bookchin, Grumpy Old Man," *Anarchy AJDA*, No. 43 (1997), p. 38.

17. Zerzan, *Anarchy AJDA*, No. 44 (1997), p. 3.

18. "The true has long been found, . . . / The ancient true, take hold of it!" The McAnarchists have taken hold of it, but they've filed off the serial numbers. Translation by Walter Kaufman in *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 180.

"It has been cynically observed," writes Christie and Meltzer, "that, despite the wealth of the anarchist tradition, every young generation that finds the way to anarchism for itself, and not by way of introduction from others, falls into the delusion of being the first to discover it. By extension the hippies were the first ever to drop out of society." Stuart Christie & Albert Meltzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy* (Stanmore Press Ltd., 1970), p. 40.

19. Max Stirner in Paterson, p. 296.

20. I am currently working on a seventeen hour rock/raga/polka opera based on the life of a stuttering 7-11 clerk down the road (it has more to do with his hamsters, really). The guitar's are tuned Eflat-C-E-Csharp-Asharp-F except for the bass which only has an E string (in the D string position) tuned to a very flaccid C. Percussion is provided by palm leaves on the rumps of wild asses (forty-three, to be precise) and is in 13/6 time (the bass, of course, plays in a 12/7 time signature). Lyrics are in Yiddish and sung by a children's choir. Their mouths are sealed with strips of duct tape, and they snipe at the audience with slingshots. Each performance climaxes with a live thermonuclear explosion and Slovakian buffet. JjjOPDN WO589VHZ L/1 - a musical project so innovative, absolutely *nobody* is ready to hear it.

21. John Zerzan, *Future Primitive and Other Essays* (New York and Columbia: Autonomedia and Anarchy, 1994), p. 146.

22. John Zerzan, "Running on Emptiness: The Failure of Symbolic Thought," *Anarchy AJDA*, No.43 (1997), p.35.

23. Hakim Bey, *Temporary Autonomous Zone*, somewhere off the Internet (pay for this swill? I think not).

24. Zerzan, *Anarchy*, No. 44, p. 3.
25. Paul Z. Simons, "Rare Praise; or Bookchin Hates Us," *Anarchy AJDA*, No.43, p. 49.
26. Edmund Wilson, *To The Finland Station* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1953), p. 3.
27. Paul Goodman, *Format & Anxiety: Paul Goodman Critiques the Media* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1995), pp. 38-39.
28. See issues No. 43-44 of *Anarchy AJDA* where, in a hilarious protracted fit of pathological insecurity, the shaky egotistical egoists publish no less than *four* show trial 'reviews' of Bookchin's *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*.
29. Goodman, p. 35.
30. Hakim Bey, "An Immediatist Potlatch," *Alternative Press Review*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1995), p. 45.
31. In this context, a comparison between the lyrical content of North American inspired 'rebel' music, like Bey's bloody awful avant-garde aural atrocity, and that of the Third World is extremely instructive.
32. John Zerzan, "Youth and Regression," p. 26.
33. Bob Black, *The Abolition of Work*, Internet again (Internet servers should provide a rebate whenever a customer encounters such slop).
34. Paterson, p. 302.
35. Stirner quoted in Paterson, p. 297.

36. Paterson, pp. 136-37. One marvels at the indignity Stirner's apologists profess to suffer whenever petty-bourgeois charges are levelled at their master. What better way to evade laws than to finance the government making the laws (or MAI treaties ultimately abolishing law).

37. Timothy Bewes, *Cynicism and Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 177.

38. It should be stressed that the study of primal cultures is invaluable, and any negative critiques I've made thus far should not be construed as chauvinistic or a mere inversion of Zerzan's uniform praise for every aspect of this xenophobic, superstitious, *collectivist* (in the complete derogatory McAnarchist sense of the word), and sabre-tooth tiger stalked alleged golden age.

39. Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1993)

p. 169.

40. Laure Akai, "In Search of Unabomber," *Anarchy AJDA*, No. 43, p. 47.

41. Stirner in Paterson, p. 140.

42. Stirner in Paterson, p. 140.

43. Quoted in Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1998), p. 270.

44. Bey, *TAZ*.

45. An Ayan Rand sycophant was recently charioted into my town, capital of the most environmentally damaged province of Canada, to warn the 'swinish multitude,' most of

whom are directly or indirectly economically sustained by the oil industry, that any time they support an initiative by an environmental group they are unwittingly being manipulated into moving us all one step closer to a primitive paleolithic cave existence presided over by a cast of goddess worshiping priestesses, the real agenda of the environmental movement! The highly reactionary *Alberta Report*, catering to a bible-belt quasi-Texan readership, indulges in similar rhetoric and would probably love to be among the lucky few on *Anarchy* (sic) *AJDA*'s slender mailing list.

46. Of course the legacy of the sixties is more; but the fact that nine out of ten of today's little rebels will know more about Hendrix's flaming stratocaster than they will about freedom riders bodes poorly for the long-term survival of any gains the era achieved.